

The Great Lakes are among the nation's most precious natural resources, but the Great Lakes face a number of threats which could affect the long term economic stability of the entire Midwest. As a co-chairman of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force, I was proud to vote for S.J.Res. 45, the Great Lakes-St Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact when it passed in the House 390-25 on September 23, 2008. As an original co-sponsor to HR 6577, the House companion version, this historic legislation implements a comprehensive regional strategy as a safeguard against further drops in lake levels.

Studies document that lake levels have been on the decline since the 1970's. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, Lake Michigan is now more than 1 foot below its long-term average and the National Wildlife Federation estimates that the lakes could drop up to eight feet this century.

The desire to seize the Great Lakes water exists. We must prevent the large-scale depletion and negligence of our resource. The most shocking example of water mismanagement is the Aral Sea at the borders of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In 50 years, what once was the world's fourth largest inland sea lost 75 percent of its water due to irresponsible irrigation.

To prevent such a catastrophe from reoccurring, I was proud the House passed S.J.Res. 45 to protect our national treasure.